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Understanding The Experiences Of The Politics Of Urbanization In Two *Gecekondu* (Squatter) Neighborhoods Under Two Urban Regimes: Ethnography In The Urban Periphery Of Ankara, Turkey

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ABSTRACT: This article investigates the politics of urbanization in the Turkish context. It is built upon the premise that the "urban coalition" in the era of nationalist developmentalism, which was populist in nature, is replaced by a "new urban coalition," a neoliberal one, since the 1980s. I argue that the bargaining power of *gecekondu* (squatter) residents with municipal authorities for their "extra-legal" practices in building their houses in the former era was lost after neoliberal policies were adopted. This argument is substantiated by the ethnographic fieldwork in which the experiences of *gecekondu* residents in building, improving and (not) defending their houses and neighborhoods were obtained. Two ethnographic studies were conducted in two different sites in Ankara: a neighborhood where the *Alevis* were the majority, which became the site of leftist mobilization in the 1970s, and a district where conservative

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Sunnis lived, who supported right-wing politics. By situating the two neighborhoods in the context of the two different urban regimes, namely, those in the populist and neoliberal eras, the article points out the changing relationship of the *gecekondu* residents with the state, showing variances with respect to the differing political positions and social compositions of the two neighborhoods.

Introduction

This article investigates, in general, the politics of urbanization in the Turkish context, which is also the politics of *gecekondu*s.[1] Specifically, it investigates the changing relationship of *gecekondu* residents with the state in the pre- and post-1980 periods. The state's approach to those who built their homes in "extra-legal" ways on land that did not belong to them has attracted scholarly attention since the emergence of the "*gecekondu* problem" in the 1950s (e.g., Abraham 1964; Karpat 1976; Şenyapılı 1982; Danielson and Keleş 1985). Recent developments in cities, such as large-scale urban transformations that target the neighborhoods of the urban poor, have accentuated this interest (e.g., Karaman 2008; Ünsal and Kuyucu 2010).

While studying the relationship of *gecekondu* residents with the state, it is helpful to make a distinction between the pre-1980 period, which was the era of national developmentalism, and the post-1980s, during which neoliberal urban policies and practices were introduced. They refer to two different "urban regimes." Accordingly, in the Turkish context, it is argued that urbanization in the pre-1980 period was "soft and integrative" in which the rent appropriated from urban land was distributed to a large segment of society through *gecekondu* owners and small-scale developers (*yapsatçı*s: "one-man firms"). However, as cities started to be transformed under the neoliberal regime since the 1980s, a new type of urbanization (a "tense and exclusionary urbanization") began to dominate, which brought disadvantages to the *gecekondu* population: the peripheral land,

which was left to the use of the poor until then, began to be claimed by big capital (Işık and Pınarcıoğlu 2001). This article, by relying on empirical data obtained from two ethnographies, one of them conducted in an Alevi[2] and the other one in a Sunni *gecekondu* neighborhood, aims to bring substance to this argument. By situating the two neighborhoods in the context of the two different urban regimes, it aspires to uncover the experiences of *gecekondu* dwellers regarding their changing relationship with their homes and communities and, more importantly, with the state.

Moving beyond the homogenized image of *gecekondu*s, this article further aims to demonstrate the varied experiences of *gecekondu* residents in building, improving and (not) defending their houses, neighborhoods and communities, based on the distinctive characteristics of the two neighborhoods: in this case study, sectarian identities (Alevis vs. Sunnis) and political positions (left-wing vs. right-wing). I argue that the characteristics of the *gecekondu* neighborhoods are largely shaped by their geographical locations. In the research, the two *gecekondu* settlements had different locations in the city, which had an effect on their social composition (see Figure 1). One of the sites was located in the northern periphery of the city, which received rural migrants who were predominantly Sunni Muslims, whereas the second site was located in the eastern periphery of the city, which received a large number of rural migrants from the villages of the provinces of Central Anatolia that have been the habitus of Alevis for centuries. As a result, the two sites went through different experiences, particularly in their relationship with the state and their political engagement.

In brief, this article presents two different *gecekondu* neighborhoods in the "urban regimes" of the two different eras, namely, the pre- and post- 1980s (populist vs. neoliberal respectively). I argue that the relationship of *gecekondu* residents with the state is shaped by the urban regime of the time. Accordingly,

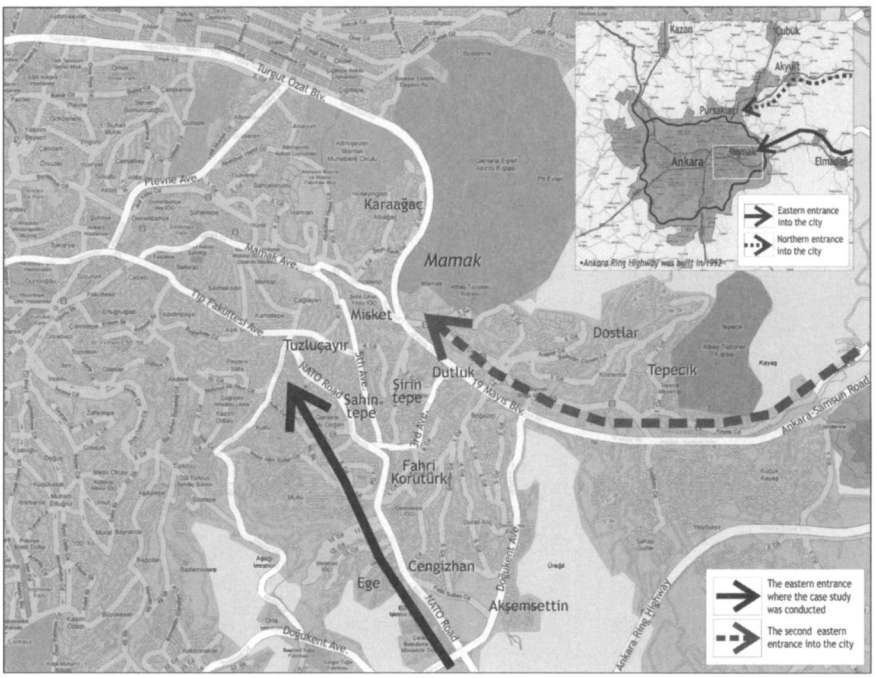
the article makes its contributions by bringing empirical data to this argument, and presents information on how *gecekondu* people experienced the two urban regimes in their lives.

Regimes of Accumulation, Urban Regimes and Urban Coalitions

Regulation theory informs us about the changes the capitalist state went through as it responded to the structural changes in the economy following the crises of the 1970s: the "post-Fordist" (neoliberal) regime of accumulation replaced the Fordist one based on Keynesian principles of full employment and universalistic welfare provision (Painter 1993). The Fordist regime of accumulation based on mass production and mass consumption between the 1940s and 1970s, more specifically the period from 1945 to 1974, gave way to the post-Fordist regime of accumulation based on flexible production and specialized "niche" forms of consumption (late 1970s until today). Accordingly, a new urban regime and new urban conditions have emerged in this era since the late 1970s, more so since the 1990s (Painter 1993). Moreover, while "(i)n the Fordist mode of development we find that land and housing was decommodified to an important extent, ... (w)ith the crisis of Fordism, ...a recommodification of land and urban property" was observed (Jager 2003: 246).

In the Turkish context, rather than the welfare state of the Fordist era in the economically developed West, the "populist state" was the major actor in producing a relatively inclusive society by distributing some rent from urban land (Işık and Pınarcıoğlu 2001). In the early stages of *gecekondu* development, the urban poor did not pay rent because they lived in the houses they constructed, and in later years, as *gecekondu*s were pulled into the housing market as the cities expanded toward their peripheries, some even became owners of apartments by sell-

FIGURE 1. A Map of Mamak Where Alevis Settled



ing their *gecekondu* land to *yapsatçı*. The private sector was out of urban rent appropriation when the state's aim at national industrialization by protecting the domestic manufacturing market from international competition brought much profit to it (Keyder 2000). This lack of interest of both the private sector and the state in the urban land brought advantages to *gecekondu* owners to improve their lives and positions in society. Thus, *gecekondu*s acted as the welfare system in Turkey, a society with scarce resources (Başlevent and Dayoğlu 2005). In other words, the welfare state in the Fordist era in the West corresponds to the populist state in the same era in Turkey. As in the West, this populist era was abandoned in the period of economic liberalization in the 1980s (Keyder 2000). A new

type of urbanization emerged, characterized by its exclusionary practices and increased competition over urban land (Işık and Pınarcıoğlu 2001). As neoliberal capitalism inserted its rules into society, the national bourgeoisie, protected by the state against international competition in the previous era of national developmentalism, began to reorient itself; as the country opened itself to global capital and foreign consumption goods, it shifted its investments from industrial production to other sectors, including the land and construction markets. Thus, the urban land rent began to be appropriated by big capital. Specifically big companies bought cheap land without development plans (*imar planı*) on the peripheries of cities, and when the land was opened to development by the municipal government, they made huge profits from the land ("development rent") (Işık and Pınarcıoğlu 2001). Different from the limited rent to be appropriated by the *yapsatçı* by building a single block on the plot, big construction companies appropriated enormous rent by building large-scale housing projects, as well as shopping malls and entertainment complexes for the upper classes. In this process, the state played a significant role in transferring the rent through private-public partnerships (Ünsal and Kuyucu 2010).

In brief, two different urban regimes prevailed in the two different regimes of accumulation in the Turkish context, namely, populist and neoliberal urban regimes. While in the populist urban regime, *gecekondu* owners were advantageous because of the fact that they were tolerated by the state to build *gecekondu*s to live in and later to appropriate *gecekondu* land rent, in the neoliberal urban regime they lost their leverage when urban peripheral land became a too-profitable asset to leave to *gecekondu* residents.

The concept of the "urban growth coalition" has been introduced to refer to urban politics and governance in which the landed elites, such as "rentiers" (place entrepreneurs), local politicians and the local media, in their common interests of

making profit by attracting investment to their locality, form coalitions (Molotch 1976; Logan and Molotch 1987). Recently, growing private sector involvement in urban governance is acknowledged in the literature, building partnerships with the public sector, mainly with municipal authorities (Harding et al. 2000). The concept of the "urban coalition" has been developed with a change in the original meaning of the "urban growth coalition" concept to refer to the alliance formed to appropriate urban land rent, which is escalating as the economy moves from manufacturing to real estate. Accordingly, several Turkish scholars used the terms "populist urban coalition" and "neoliberal urban coalition" to refer to urban governance in the pre- and post-1980s periods (e.g., Ünsal and Kuyucu 2010).

Before moving to the two *gecekondu* settlements, brief information on *gecekondu* development in Turkey is provided below. This helps contextualize the research sites in the socio-economic and political conditions of Turkey.

Gecekondu Development in Turkey: Populist Urban Coalitions in the Pre-1980s

Gecekondu settlements as a sociophysical phenomenon appeared in the urban landscape in Turkey following World War II, although some shanties were built here and there earlier, particularly in Ankara during the construction boom when it was declared as the modern capital of the new Republic in 1923 (Şenyapılı 2004). *Gecekondu* development in big cities was the result of "fast depeasantization and slow workerization" when massive displacement in the countryside caused by the mechanization of agriculture to increase productivity was not accompanied by the same level of industrialization in cities (Kıray 1970). This was the result of the Marshall Plan of the United States (U.S.), when Turkey, allied with the U.S., was situated as a buffer zone between the "Communist Bloc"

under the control of the former Soviet Union and the "Western Bloc" under the leadership of the U.S. Especially small farmers, sharecroppers and agricultural tenants, in their search for a new livelihood, started to move to big cities, particularly to Istanbul, Ankara and Izmir (Şenyapılı 1998, 2004). The cities were not ready to accommodate such a large number of newcomers, most of whom were poor. The economic policy of the time that aimed at rapid industrialization required the channeling of the national budget to industrial development and the construction of infrastructure, including highways and power plants (Öncü 1988). In this economic model, sparing money to build social housing for poor migrants was out of the question. Thus, the solution to the housing problem of the incoming poor migrants came to be to let them build their own houses, lifting this responsibility from the state. Migrants built their houses on land that did not belong to them, usually on public land. This "extra-legal" existence rendered them vulnerable before the state. The name given to squatter housing in Turkey (the *gecekondu)* implies the unapproved nature of their construction: to escape the attention of authorities, migrants would build their houses at night and as quickly as possible. They would put up four walls and a roof, and on the roof they would place a Turkish flag signifying their loyalty to the state, and on the windows they would hang curtains to give the image that the house was inhabited (Payne 1982). The law of 1924 that required a court order in order to demolish an inhabited dwelling worked to the advantage of the *gecekondu* people and protected their homes against immediate demolition (Payne 1982).

Poor migrants from the countryside started building their houses close to job opportunities, i.e., close to the city center (e.g., Altındağ in Ankara, which was close to the city center of the time, Ulus; it would be called "the golden hill," indicating its promise of wealth) and to factories (e.g., Zeytinburnu in Istanbul, where the tannery industry was located, and in

Kazlıçeşme nearby) (Şenyapılı 1998, 2004). As these areas were rapidly consumed by the large waves of migration, the unoccupied land in the peripheries of the cities became the new target of *gecekondu* development. The fact that most of the peripheral land belonged to the state (treasury land - *hazine arazisi*), and not to individuals, made it easier for state authorities to turn a blind eye to this development, and a tacit agreement between *gecekondu* settlers and state authorities developed (Keyder 2000). The voting potential of the *gecekondu* population was quickly noticed by the politicians who made promises of services and infrastructure, and more importantly, of title deeds to *gecekondu* people in return for their votes and political loyalty. This brought to the *gecekondu* population some bargaining power (Şenyapılı 1982), and *gecekondu*s mushroomed. *Gecekondu* amnesties were passed and title deeds were distributed during election times. Despite the reaction of the urban elite to the "ruralization of their cities" (Erman 2001), *gecekondu*s became a permanent feature of big cities in Turkey.

The improvements in *gecekondu* neighborhoods went hand in hand with the increasing role of the *gecekondu* population in the economy. They were the cheap labor force much needed by the private sector in the import-substituting industrialization that relied on the import of expensive foreign technology and capital (Şenyapılı 1982). They were also the consumers in the domestic market, whose role as consumers was again much needed by the private sector in the closed economy of the time (Şenyapılı 1982).

In brief, in this era of the politics of urbanization until the 1980s, there was a "populist urban coalition" between politicians seeking loyalty, industrialists in need of cheap labor for profit, *gecekondu* dwellers seeking affordable housing, and a state that was more interested in national industrialization than social welfare provision, including social housing for the poor (Ünsal and Kuyucu 2010). This "urban coalition" did not function smoothly at all times, and the actors were not equals:

it was built on the asymmetric relations between the state and the *gecekondu* population: the lack of titles deprived *gecekondu* people of property rights, rendering them vulnerable before state authorities. On the other hand, as some *gecekondu* owners obtained their titles, usually during election times, this increased their bargaining power with the state for the upgrading of their neighborhoods (Heper 1982). However, state authorities were often reluctant to distribute titles to *gecekondu* owners, probably since this would weaken their power over the *gecekondu* population (Keyder 2000).

Over the years, the state attempted to regulate this expanding "extra-legality" in housing. The first comprehensive *gecekondu* law (Law no. 775) was passed in 1966. It aimed at the upgrading of those *gecekondu*s in good condition, the demolition of those in poor condition and at undesirable locations, and the prohibition of new *gecekondu* construction. Only the first goal was accomplished to some degree. The other two goals, because of populist politics and resource scarcity, were never put into action (Danielson and Keleş 1985). By the 1970s, *gecekondu* settlements had become low-density established neighborhoods (Şenyapılı 1982).

This "populist urban coalition" which was less than perfect, nonetheless allowed the integration of the *gecekondu* population into urban society in economic and physical terms. Yet, urbanites were discontent with this development; they were unwilling to share their cultural institutions with them, putting severe limits on the "cultural integration" of rural migrants into urban society (Şenyapılı 1982). For the established urbanites, they were the "rural Other" who failed to become urban, constituting an obstacle to Turkish modernization (Erman 2001).

There were some challenges to this urban coalition in the 1970s by the rising leftist movement. Leftists emphasized the use value of *gecekondu*s and tried to keep profit-making ("exchange value") from the *gecekondu* land. They targeted the *gecekondu* population to "raise consciousness" as the "working

class" acting against their exploitation by the "capitalist class" (Aslan 2004). This leftist mobilization was interrupted by the state's memorandum of March 12, 1971. The military regime closed down all the neighborhood beautification associations in *gecekondu* areas; and "(t)he demolitions (of *gecekondu*s) became a significant aspect of the military regime determined to "restore order" in the cities" (Batuman 2008: 1933). The leftist movement gained back its momentum in the 1970s and continued with its mission of transforming society in radical terms. Through the "liberated territories" projects in *gecekondu* neighborhoods, it aimed to create localities organized as a socio-spatial collectivity out of the control of the state, in which local people would run their locality through people's committees (*halk komiteleri*) (Aslan 2004).

By the 1970s, an informal *gecekondu* market emerged, in which money and profit was involved (Alpar and Yener 1991). It was controlled by the mafia in some cases. The mafia, who would usually be small local groups organized informally, would enclose public or agricultural land to sell it to prospective *gecekondu* builders, even advertising it in newspapers (Payne 1982). In their profit-oriented practices, they would now and then invade private land, intimidating the owners by using force. Some would also have connections with paramilitary groups. The disadvantages which rural migrants started to face in building *gecekondu*s increased the attraction of leftist groups for them, who promised protection against the mafia and houses with use value. Some *gecekondu* neighborhoods allied with the organized leftist power and went through the experience of "liberated territoriesm," particularly those *gecekondu* neighborhoods where Alevis were spatially concentrated. Examples of these neighborhoods in various cities are: the May Day neighborhood in Ümraniye (today it is called Mustafa Kemal district) (Aslan 2004), Gülsuyu in Maltepe (Bozkulak 2005) and Okmeydanı in Şişli (Massicard 2005), all in Istanbul, Tuzluçayır in Mamak (Ankara), and Gültepe in Konak (Izmir);

all were receptive to the political projects of the left. In Gülsuyu in the 1970s, there was an unorganized resistance in the beginning to the attempts of *gecekondu* demolition. Later on, under the leadership of leftist university students, it was transformed into an organized action. The fact that it was a poor neighborhood where Alevis were the majority helped the locality gain a political identity (Bozkulak 2005). This was similar in Okmeydanı, which also housed mostly the Alevi working class (Massicard 2005). Thus, an alliance of the *gecekondu* population with leftist groups was formed, and started challenging the former urban coalition among the *gecekondu* population, the private sector and the state.

In the late 1970s, leftist uprising in society was counteracted by ultranationalists, who became a strong counterveiling force against "communists." Unprecedented violence erupted when the groups with counter ideologies, armed with guns, started fighting. In this politicized and polarized society, *gecekondu* areas soon came to be fiercely contested between the rival sides. It is important to stress that, although *gecekondu* areas were inflicted by violence, violence did not originate in them (Danielson and Keleş 1985). In brief, "the politics of disorder" characterized the 1970s (Danielson and Keleş 1985).

The unrest and violence in society was ended by a military coup on September 12, 1980. This violent interruption started a new era for Turkish society, radically different from the previous era in terms of its economic policies and political visions, leading to a "new urban coalition," a neoliberal one.

New Developments in *Gecekondu* Areas: Neoliberal Urban Coalitions in the Post-1980s

The 1980s witnessed the shift from the state-protected national economy based on import- substituting industrialization to the neoliberal export-oriented economy. The new economy

policy was initiated by the January 24, 1980 Decisions by Özal when he was the Prime Ministry's undersecretary and the acting undersecretary of the State Planning Organization. In this new era, we can identify two major developments in *gecekondu* areas. The first, which started in the 1980s, is about transforming *gecekondu* areas into apartment districts, in which the rent appropriated from the process would be shared between *gecekondu* owners and *yapsatçı*s (Işık and Pınarcıoğlu 2001). The second development, which started in the 2000s, is again about the transformation of *gecekondu* areas, but this time the rent from the *gecekondu* land would be appropriated by municipal governments, some state authorities (mainly the Prime Ministry's Mass Housing Administration [MHA]), and big construction firms and developers.

Regarding the first development, through a series of laws and amendments between 1983 and 1987, the government attempted to integrate *gecekondu*s into the formal housing market. In law no. 2981, which was passed in 1984, the construction of up to four storey apartment buildings on *gecekondu* lots was allowed. *Yapsatçı*s would be the main actors of this physical transformation; they would buy the *gecekondu* land from the owner in exchange for several apartments in the building to be built on the *gecekondu* plot. This law accomplished two goals: on the one hand, it opened peripheral land to commercialization under market forces, and on the other hand, as Şenyapılı (1998) argues, it prevented social unrest by providing economic gains to the urban poor, who had become highly disadvantaged in the liberalization of the economy. Accordingly, the urban coalition of the former era was developed further that included *gecekondu* owners who were enabled by the new law to participate in the formal housing market, *yapsatçı*s in the private sector, and municipal authorities who were authorized to make development plans (*imar planları*) of the districts. Municipal governments, by holding the power to make decisions about which districts

would be provided with the plans, still preserved their bargaining power with the *gecekondu* population.

In this new era, the *gecekondu* mafia flourished in the real estate market, turning into large organized groups built upon common place of origin. It overlapped with membership in ethnic and religious communities (*cemaat*) in some cases. The support networks of the earlier era based on common place of origin tended to turn into mafia-like organizations as *gecekondu*s were commodified and legalized in the lucrative housing and land market, and as competition over urban peripheral land sharpened[3] (Işık and Pınarcıoğlu 2001). This was more true in the case of Istanbul, which is the economic capital of the country, than in other cities. The mafia would invade large tracks of land by using aggressive methods, including resorting to force and bribing, and build multi-story apartment buildings on them. An "illegal city" could be constructed as the outcome, as in the case of Sultanbeyli in Istanbul where even the town hall lacks a legal title deed.

In the restructuring of the housing market, MHA was established in 1984 to provide credits mostly to housing cooperatives to activate the housing market. As middle-class housing cooperatives were established, the urban periphery began to be transformed, and the *gecekondu* land began to change hands (Öncü 1997). Some *gecekondu* people started improving their economic conditions as the result of exchanging their *gecekondu* land with several apartments. A "new class" of rural migrants emerged, who were regarded as the "undeserving rich Other": "who once built their *gecekondu*s in one night and now they were becoming millionaires in one day" (Erman 2001: 994).

With respect to the second development, by the 1990s, the profit-oriented reappropriation of the peripheral land increased by the new claims on it. In the new economy, the urban real estate market was seen as a major profit-generating mechanism. Gated communities, i.e., luxurious houses protected by high-tech and privatized security industry for the upper classes, and

*site*s, i.e., multi-story suburban housing for the middle classes, were built by big construction companies on the fringes of the cities (Öncü 1997).

However, a full neoliberal urban regime could only develop in the 2000s. Under the rule of the economically liberal and politically conservative Justice and Development Party (JDP),[4] which controlled both the central government and most of the municipalities in the 2000s, a "new spatial regime" with its own ideology and institutions was established. It functioned in accordance with the prevailing economic rationale of the neoliberal era. The attitude of the state towards *gecekondu*s was completely reversed: the "zero *gecekondu*" policy replaced the populist policies of the former era. As Keyder (2000) argues, when neoliberalism becomes the order of the day, populist policies are bound to erode. While the Özal government in the 1980s attempted to transform *gecekondu* areas through the intervention of *yapsatçı*s, allowing both *gecekondu* owners (i.e., the urban poor) and *yapsatçı*s (i.e., those actors in the construction sector that had limited capital) to get shares from the rent appropriated from the peripheral urban land, this time a transformation model in which the rent would be appropriated by big capital was adopted. Thus, in the massive restructuring of cities, a new neoliberal urban coalition emerged that was radically different from the earlier one. The major actors in this new coalition would be large-scale private developers, big construction firms, national and international financiers, and real estate investment trusts, various state agencies, such as MHA, and metropolitan and district municipalities (Ünsal and Kuyucu 2010). The state and municipal authorities would participate directly in the appropriation of urban rent.

In this new era of neoliberal urbanism, state and municipal institutions, as well as MHA, were reformed. Through a series of laws, municipalities became major actors in the restructuring of cities since the 1980s. In 1985, the Development/Planning Law no. 3194 (*İmar Kanunu*) authorized municipalities to

prepare development plans for their cities, which curbed the role of the central planning state authorities, bringing greater power to local governments and making them the most powerful political actors in the decisionmaking about the distribution of urban rent. Through piecemeal planning, they obtained the power to decide which parts of the city to develop, and thus who would make profit from their land (Yeşil 2008). A two-tier municipal system, which was enacted in 1984, brought more power to metropolitan municipalities in initiating "prestigious mega-projects" (Karaman 2008). Moreover, the laws that were passed in 2004 (no. 5216) and 2005 (no. 5393), and particularly the law no. 5366, authorized both the metropolitan and district municipalities to intervene in the neighborhoods of the urban poor to implement renewal projects. "Urban transformation projects" (UTPs) began to be implemented both in deteriorated historic inner-city districts and *gecekondu* areas in the peripheries of the cities. In the former, the aim was to "regenerate" the housing stock by renovating the buildings, and hence to make them attractive to the upper classes, and in the latter, to transform low-density *gecekondu* areas into high-rise "modern" apartment districts. Consequently, municipal governments have started employing aggressive strategies to restructure cities, opening potentially profitable spaces to investment through UTPs (Ünsal and Kuyucu 2010).

Moreover, MHA was restructured starting in 2002 after the JDP came to power. The laws that were passed since then [particularly the amendments made in the Law of Mass Housing (Law no. 2985)], by endowing it with the duty of the direct supply of housing, made MHA a major actor in the construction sector. Today MHA can transfer public land for free to circulate it in the private market. It can also form partnerships with the private sector. In the latter case, either the construction firm pays MHA for the land transferred to it or gives MHA shares from the profit it makes from its housing project (*hasılat paylaşım modeli*).[5] MHA has also become a major actor in UTPs: munici-

pal governments sign protocols with MHA to implement UTPs, and after solving legal problems regarding land and property ownership, which is a complicated and controversial process in both inner-city districts and *gecekondu* areas, they prepare the land for MHA to construct the UTP.[6]

In this process of constructing UTPs, *gecekondu* people were displaced when their houses and long-established neighborhoods were demolished, and they were usually relocated to faraway locations (Karaman 2008). Much of the rent in *gecekondu* areas is today being transferred to the private sector through municipal governments (Karaman 2008). Moreover, MHA's domination in the construction sector is "displacing" small actors in the construction business, i.e., *yapsatçıs*, while the big capital is increasing its profit by building gated communities, shopping malls, and entertainment complexes on the urban periphery.

In this era, new discourses have emerged that define *gecekondu* areas as the sites of crime, decay and radicalism, as "tumors that have surrounded our cities, which should be removed by surgical operations such as urban transformation projects" (Prime Minister's speech quoted in Ünsal and Kuyucu 2010: 54). *Gecekondu* residents are further defined as "shameless invaders of precious urban land" (Karaman 2008), and in the new Criminal Code that was passed in 2004, *gecekondu* construction was made a criminal offense (Ünsal and Kuyucu 2010).

In brief, in this new coalition under neoliberal urban practices, the losers are those at the lower level of society: small-scale developers, *gecekondu* residents without title deeds, and *gecekondu* tenants. *Gecekondu* owners with title deeds also become disadvantaged as their bargaining power with developers for several apartments is curbed by urban transformation projects (UTPs), in which they are given one apartment in a MHA building in return for their *gecekondu* land.

As the *gecekondu* land is transferred from *gecekondu* people to the municipality, sometimes by force, sometimes by manipula-

tion, and rarely by consent, *gecekondu* settlements become ripe for local resistance. While former liberated territories where Alevis are the majority tend to organize themselves against the UTPs, *gecekondu* neighborhoods inhabited by religious/conservative people (mostly Sunnis), who lack an oppositional culture and who express their loyalty to the ruling JDP, seem to comply easily with the demands of municipal authorities.

After this introduction to the development and transformation of *gecekondu* settlements in the Turkish context, the two *gecekondu* neighborhoods in the fieldwork are presented below with a focus on the urban coalitions' workings on the ground.

Workings of the Populist and Neoliberal Urban Coalitions on the Ground: The Ethnographic Fieldwork of Two *Gecekondu* Neighborhoods

The two case studies were investigated in different projects.[7] The major aim of the first project was to investigate the experiences of displacement in the Northern Ankara Entrance Urban Transformation Project (NAEUTP). In-depth interviews (95) and questionnaires (160) were carried out with those whose *gecekondu*s were demolished in the project. They were visited first in their apartments in the municipality's temporary housing (*lojman*), and later in their apartments in the MHA's housing project after construction of the buildings was completed. Detailed information was gathered about how they constructed their *gecekondu*s and how they established their neighborhood. The second project investigated the role of place in politics, including identity politics and political mobilization. It started in 2000 and continued in intervals: between 2000 and 2003, 100 in-depth interviews were conducted, and participant observation was undertaken during regular visits to the research site. Using the oral history technique, efforts were made to collect

information on the past of the neighborhood by reaching those who directly witnessed the "liberated territory" period. In the following years, the neighborhood was visited occasionally to observe the changes in the lives of the people and the neighborhood.

When we look at the case studies, the two *gecekondu* settlements share some characteristics, while they differ in some ways due to their different political engagements and orientations. What is common in both cases is people's hard labor that they put into building their houses and neighborhoods. It was a big challenge for the people in both *gecekondu* sites to construct houses under precarious conditions defined by limited economic resources and illegal land occupation. In the sections below, first the conservative Sunni site in the populist and neoliberal urban regimes is presented, followed by the oppositional Alevi site.

A Neighborhood in the Northern Urban Periphery: The Locality of Conservative Sunnis

This neighborhood was in the north of the city on the route connecting the city to the airport. It was built on steep slopes; and the houses were scattered without a particular order. The neighborhood had basic services and infrastructure. Yet, residents had uneven access to them due to their location: while those living down the hill were better serviced, disadvantages increased for those living up the hill. Many of the residents were from the villages of the provincial districts of Ankara and from the villages of the provinces close to Ankara, mainly conservative towns largely inhabited by Sunni Muslims (see Table 1). They mostly supported the ruling JDP.

TABLE 1. Administrative Districts From Which The Sunni Respondents In The Northern Periphery Of Ankara Came.

Province (*il*)	Administrative District (*ilçe*)
Ankara	Kalecik
	Çubuk
	Beypazarı
	Kızılcahamam
	Çamlıdere
Çorum	Merkez
	İskilip
	Bayat
	Sungurlu
Yozgat	Merkez
	Sorgun
	Yerköy
Çankırı	Merkez
	Şabanözü
	Eldivan
Kırşehir	Çiçekdağı
Kırıkkale	Keskin

In the section below, the experiences of poor people in building their houses and neighborhood are presented; and quotations from in-depth interviews are provided to bring in people's voices.

Building The Gecekondu, The Neighborhood, And The Community In The 1970s: The Era Of The Populist Urban Regime

The development of this neighborhood goes back to the 1970s when people started building shanty-like houses. The area was vacant then: some agricultural land and mostly steep hills. The invasion of land and the construction of *gecekondu*s was not an organized act; it happened by the acts of small groups of relatives and family members. People learned from each other (e.g., from their fellow villagers in the city or from their friends at the workplace) about the availability of land for *gecekondu* construction. In their search for numeral strength, they would invite their relatives, both those living in the city and back in the village, to come to construct houses in their vicinity. If relatives did not join them, it would be the husband and the wife who would construct the house, occasionally by the help of a paid craftsman. The outcome was shabby structures scattered here and there.

The neighborhood was built on the slopes of a rocky hill. Residents carved out steps in the rocks to be able to reach their houses. The houses, because of the steep slope, were usually built like train cars, one room opening into the other; and if the family could afford it, the house would have a terrace-like balcony. Despite geographical disadvantages, i.e., limited flat land and small amount of soil, most families had gardens in which they grew vegetables and fruit trees. They had to carry soil up to the house in order to make a garden because gardens contributed psychologically and economically to their well-being, as stated by many respondents:

> In the summer time, after I woke up in the morning, I would immediately go out into my garden. I would work in the garden, watering the trees and taking caring of them. I would eat their fresh fruits. I had a bird; it would visit the garden everyday, twittering cheerfully. I loved being in my garden.

> I had a garden, I had a balcony. My balcony was very large. We would sit there with neighbors, chatting and drinking tea.... There was almost no soil. We carried it so that we would have a garden. We had roses, quince trees and apricot trees. We made it happen. Why? It is because greenery is very important to us.

Thus, in these spatial practices, they created environments that responded to their needs and desires. This enabled them to reproduce, to some extent, their village environment (single-storey houses in gardens). Yet the production of such environments led to the stigmatization of *gecekondu* areas in society as the place of peasants (Erman 2001).

They put a lot of effort into building their *gecekondu*s, as described in the quotation below:

> I did not know where the place was. My husband took me there. It was on a very steep slope, no paths, no light; you just keep climbing up and up. I said to my husband, "This is not a flat land; it is rocky. How can we build a house here? We will slide down." My husband went down and came with a digger he rented. The machine came up to the lot by opening a path behind it. The land was all stones, and the digger leveled it. We did not have any money to buy bricks and wood. We had three young children, and my husband did not have a regular income. He borrowed money from a relative. By this money we bought some bricks, roof titles and wood, and the rest we put in installments. We brought the materials in a car, but the car could not go up to our lot, so we carried them on our backs.

It was difficult to build the house physically in such a tough geography, and it also put much economic strain on people's limited financial resources:

> We built it with our own meager means. The suffering we had, it is hard to describe. There was only a tiny path used by the cattle. We carried the bricks and cement on our backs. I suffer from slipped disc today. I wish those rocks could speak

> to tell you about our sufferings. To reach our house, we would climb up 250-300 steps and climb down 250-300 steps, it was in the middle of the hillside. We suffered a lot.

In the urban regime of the time, the state and municipality were there to bargain for infrastructure and services. Interestingly, the women in these conservative Sunni families would go to public institutions to seek help:

> We went to TEDAŞ (the state's electric company), all women, our husbands did not have the time. Again it was us, the women, who went to the municipality to ask for sewage pipes. We went to ask for roads, for steps.

Bargaining with municipal authorities for infrastructure, as well as constructing the infrastructure, was a collective act. If the municipality agreed to bring in infrastructure, it might take years to do it due to the municipality's limited resources and the lower priority given to it. Thus, the local residents took on the responsibility to do some of the labor, building roads, digging canals for water pipes and erecting electric polls, while the municipality mostly provided machinery and construction materials, and in some cases, laborers.

> We went to the municipality to ask politely for electricity, running water, steps, roads. We asked for them and the municipality provided them. Everyday one neighbor would serve lunch for the laborers. The municipality gave us drainage pipes; our men carried them on their backs. Our husbands would be out at work during the day, and when they came back, they would start digging canals. We, the wives, held the lamps to provide light for them. We provided our labor. We did it all together.

Paradoxically, despite the support of municipal authorities in the development of the neighborhood, there was always the threat of demolition. The people, while trying to pull together

their limited material resources to build their houses, had to struggle against state authorities to preserve them. Some houses were demolished several times, but they were rebuilt by their occupants:

> I was pregnant to my third child when they came to demolish my house. I built it again in the following night. I discovered that if you painted the house, they would not demolish it because they would not be able to distinguish it as newly built.

> My husband was the master, I was the laborer, we built the house together. We had no money. We built a concrete wall to keep the soil from sliding. But in the morning they (the municipal police) came and knocked it down. They would monitor us by their binoculars, and they would come to destroy the construction when they saw it built. We had some bricks from the earlier construction. We built one room, in which our two children slept. They again came to demolish it. They knocked down one corner. My neighbor started screaming. But this was no good; when they heard you scream, they would get angry and demolish more. Only the two walls were left undestroyed. We had some furniture inside. They knocked down the walls on the furniture. When the men went away, we started building again. We lived almost three years like that: they demolished what we built, and we re-built it.

There was also the mafia. Many of the residents had to pay money for their *gecekondu* land. Interestingly, the mafia, in some cases, played a positive role in the development of the *gecekondu* community, acting as the community leader. For example, the mafia leader would bargain with municipal authorities for infrastructure and services, bribing, or intimidating them if necessary. He might ask for money in return, as observed in other neighborhoods (Aslan 2004). The mafia leader, as a respondent explained, would also act as a mediator, solving disputes, and as a matchmaker, arranging marriages.

Despite their economic and political vulnerabilities, it was the social aspect of *gecekondu* living that enabled their survival in a hostile environment. They reproduced the intimate relations of the *Gemeinschaft*:

> We (nextdoor neighbors) were all like a big family, our husbands, our children. We ate together, taking turns, once in my house, once in my neighbor's house. Like a family, we would sit freely in each other's house, eat together, and share our troubles, our joy. We thought of our neighbor's children as our own. We trusted each other.

They improved their *gecekondu*s over the years, for example, making a separate kitchen and bringing the toilet inside the house, and even covering walls and floors with ceramic tiles. They extended their houses by adding rooms and floors, and some even built another house on the same plot of their original *gecekondu*, usually placing their newly wed children (usually sons) in them. Thus, the early shabby structures were converted into sturdy houses with basic conveniences.

In the 1970s, as leftist mobilization increased its power in society, the neighborhood was also affected by it. The residents did not join a collective anti-systemic mobilization with the leftist groups. Some would give "donation" to the leftist youth when they were asked to do so. This was partly out of intimidation and partly to be on the side of the powerful. As a respondent put it:

> In those times the majority of *gecekondu* people supported the left, but they lacked political consciousness. They had come from the village, and what they were looking for was a place of their own and a job. When the leftist youth came to the neighborhood, most residents complied because they needed protection.

In the mounting of the leftist-rightist violent confrontations in society, which were widespread in *gecekondu* areas, the

residents of this neighborhood tended to practice the tactic of "double loyalty," i.e., expressing loyalty to leftists when they were around, and to ultranationalists when they were around. Although this carried the risk of perceived betrayal by both groups, it proved useful most of the time. Toward the end of the 1970s, the neighborhood was largely controlled by ultranationalists: they would stop people to ask to which group they belonged, and they would beat them if they believed they were leftists.

The military intervention changed the rules of the game. The Turkish-Islamic synthesis was inserted into society as the binding force, which promoted Islam as a bulwark against leftism (Jongerden 2003). Being a devout Muslim became a valued property. More mosques were built in the locality. Residents expressed their loyalty to Islamist parties in elections and in return expected investments in their district.

The populist urban regime began to be challenged by radical changes in political economy, shifting to a neoliberal regime. In the 2000s, the outcomes of this shift were experienced in this neighborhood, presented below.

Reflections Of The Neoliberal Urban Coalition In The Sunni Neighborhood In The 2000s: The Northern Ankara Entrance Urban Transformation Project (NAEUTP) And Displacement

In the 2000s, the district received the attention of the mayor of the Ankara Metropolitan Municipality as an underdeveloped area that put shame on the city by its *gecekondu*s; it did not fit with the image of Ankara as a "world city." As air travel increased and the airport became a more significant location, this district located on the route to the airport received attention and became an "eyesore" in the words of the Mayor. As he stated, foreign high-ranking bureaucrats, politicians and business people would be flying to Ankara more often, and their see-

ing ugly *gecekondu*s upon entering the city was unacceptable; thus, there was an urgency to demolish the *gecekondu*s and to replace them with modern buildings to "beautify" the area and to bring it up to the standards of world cities. Legitimized by this discourse, the Northern Ankara Entrance Urban Transformation Project (NAEUTP) was aggressively put into practice in 2004 after a special law was passed at the Parliament (Law no. 5104). About 7,000 *gecekondu*s were demolished. The gardens were destroyed, and the trees which *gecekondu* residents cherished so much were cut down.[8] In some cases, it was the residents themselves who tore down their houses. The tactic of the mayor to allow people to take with them the remaining construction materials if they knocked down the houses themselves initiated such behavior. There was only minor resistance by the local people, in which a part of the highway connecting the city to the airport was occupied by a group of protestors. It was broken immediately when the mayor made his appearance in the scene together with the police force, making a mixture of promises and threats. Many people were caught unguarded against the UTP in their belief that "their government" would guard their interests.

Not to lose them all, the mayor offered a compensation scheme: those *gecekondu* owners with titles would receive a standard apartment in the new housing complex built by MHA in return of their *gecekondu* land; and those without titles would be entitled to apartment ownership in the MHA's social housing project by paying a mortgage for about 15 years.[9] However, it was not received favorably by the majority: in the former group, many perceived that it would have been much more profitable to exchange their *gecekondu* land with a *müteahhit* (more general term for *yapsatçı*) who would have given more than one apartment in return. And in the latter group, many families had incomes below the minimum wage, and some did not have even regular incomes, which created serious concerns about their ability to pay regular installments for 15 years,

rendering this pay scheme unrealistic at best. Nonetheless, by the tactical maneuvers used in the project's implementation, such as promising people to place them in the Municipality's temporary housing (*lojman*),[10] which would be given on the first come first save basis, and many signed the contract and handed in their house keys to the authorities.

In brief, in the practices of dislocation and relocation, their *gecekondu*s were demolished and they were placed in high-rise blocks of the MHA. Thus, the other outcome of this neoliberal urban regime for *gecekondu* residents was to start living in physical environments that were "foreign" to them, i.e., high-rise apartment blocks. Different from the earlier era when the state was absent in the production of housing for the poor, in the new era, rural migrants lost the chance of living in environments that were shaped in accordance with their needs and preferences, as the state increasingly intervened in the spaces of the urban poor.[11] In their new housing environments, they were expected to change to adapt to apartment life in high-rise blocks, living "modern" lives.[12] While the majority missed their *gecekondus* and expressed their desire to move back, some perceived it as a chance to integrate into urban society. Nevertheless, their lives and spaces were radically transformed in the new era of neoliberal urbanism.

The following section describes the neighborhood in which the Alevis were the majority.

A Neighborhood in the Eastern Urban Periphery: The Locality of the "Oppositional" Alevis

The neighborhood was in the east of the city on the route to Eastern Anatolia. It was built on flat land 10 kilometers from the city center Kızılay. It was a low-density residential environment of one- or two-storey houses, with several grocery stores run by local people, an elementary school, and a small

mosque built after the military intervention. An asphalt road entered the neighborhood on which public buses and private mini-buses run. The initial section of the neighborhood that was built in the 1970s was orderly: a gridiron plan, roads lined up with houses on both sides. The sections that were added in the following years were irregular, with paths going down to the valley and houses scattered without a plan.

TABLE 2. Administrative Districts From Which The Sunni Respondents In The Eastern Periphery Of Ankara Came.

Province (*il*)	Administrative District (*ilçe*)
Çorum	İskilip
	Sungurlu
	Uğurludağ
	Osmancık
Kırşehir	Merkez
Yozgat	Kadışehir
	Sarıkaya
	Çekerek

More than 70% of the local population was Alevi and the rest was Sunni. Thus, a minority group was the majority in this locality. The Alevis were mostly ethnic Turks, only 1% was Kurdish. Most of the residents were from the villages of the provinces in Central Anatolia where Ankara is located (see Tables 2, 3).

TABLE 3. Administrative Districts From Which The Alevi Respondents In The Eastern Periphery Of Ankara Came.

Province (*il*)	Administrative District (*ilçe*)
Sivas	Divriği
	Zara
	Gürün
	Yıldızeli
	Kangal
	Gemerek
Çorum	Merkez
	Uğurludağ
	Ortaköy
	İskilip
	Sungurlu
Yozgat	Merkez
	Sorgun
	Çekerek
	Şiran
Nevşehir	Hacı Bektaş

Building The Gecekondu, The Neighborhood, And The Community In The 1970s: The "Liberated Territory" Project Of The Left

The neighborhood was formed in the 1970s in the context of leftist mobilization in the wider society. Before the 1970s, the larger *gecekondu* settlement experienced a formation similar to other *gecekondu* neighborhoods. *Gecekondu*s were built here and there by individual families, often with the help of relatives. By the 1970s, the part of the settlement closer to the city, Tuzluçayır, was full with *gecekondu*s. Thus, when a group of leftists wanted to create their own community, they moved farther away from the city center and decided on this site. It

was then a sparse locality, only 20 to 25 houses, mostly inhabited by the people working in the brick factory nearby. One of the leaders at the time described the neighborhood's building process as follows:

> There was no land left to build *gecekondu*s in Tuzluçayır, so we moved here. We were about 150 families. We were going to build a community of our own. But my friends gave up when they found out that the land was the nearby village's pasture. They said it would conflict with their socialist moral values, that they would never take away land from villagers. But the village *muhtar*[13] would sell the land anyway.

Interestingly, the *muhtar* acted like the *gecekondu* mafia, selling for profit the land that belonged to the village. Taking a stand against this practice, this respondent, along with some 70 other families, stayed and started to build the neighborhood. He called his friends from Tuzluçayır to help develop the neighborhood. Thus, the leftist youth provided physical labor to construct the infrastructure, digging canals for drainage pipes, erecting electric posts, and building roads. Leftist architecture students drew the plan of the neighborhood, and the leftist youth distributed the land to those who needed a house to live in. Doing all this was a continuous struggle for the leftists, trying both to have access to resources (pipes, posts, etc.) and to persuade the local people that they could succeed. They now and then used their relations with their acquaintances in public offices. In the words of a former leader: "I had a relative in the department of Water Works. By his help, I got a truck full of pipes. When the people saw the pipes, they completely believed us; they believed that we would keep our promises."

In the process of the construction of the neighborhood, contacts with state authorities, contrary to what would be expected, were kept: negotiations would continue between the local people, or the leftists in some cases, and municipal authorities about

bringing services, such as building a school building. One such negotiation was stated by a former activist as follows:

> There was this rumor that the governor was a fascist, but he treated us well. He said, "People say that you are communists, that you collect money from people for your own cause. But I know that you are good people. I know that you also give money (to construct the school building). I will help you (build the school building). But, in return I want you to wipe the slogans off the walls."

The mafia was kept out by the leftists: in their anti-capitalistic ideology, they were committed to put an end to profit-oriented *gecekondu* development.

In this process, the locality was constructed collectively by the local people and the leftist youth. There was collective action to make the locality a better place to live. For example, rallies were organized to protest the garbage dump in the neighborhood. Women would stand in front of the garbage trucks to prevent their entrance. Consequently, people developed a special relationship with the locality, not only as their neighborhood which they constructed but also as the site of their political struggle.

In brief, different from the first neighborhood's spontaneous formation, this neighborhood's development was a planned one in which profit-seeking actors were kept out; it was also a politically induced and strictly controlled process. The urban coalition of the time, with its capitalist profit-orientedness, political populism and the subordination of the *gecekondu* population, was left. Instead a new development model of the neighborhood, which promised power and advantages to the local population, was adopted. However, this time the left intervened in the lives of the *gecekondu* people: they wanted to transform rural migrants into the "working class." Many of the local Alevis allied with the left, whereas the local religious Sunnis reacted negatively to the leftist presence in the neighborhood, yet they were repressed by the leftist youth. Consequently, the neighborhood gained a political

identity as the site of leftists. When the military intervened on September 12, 1980, the people were traumatized: many were arrested and jailed, tortured and even killed. A woman sadly mentioned: "There was a young university student who came to our house and solved our electricity problem. He did not show up again. I was worried. Later I found out that he was killed."

Following the military coup d'etat, the neighborhood was administratively reorganized, divided into five smaller neighborhoods. Ironically, two of the new neighborhoods were named after two generals who were involved in the military coup. A police station was set up in the larger district, and again ironically, it was called "Yavuz Sultan Selim Police Station," the Ottoman Sultan who the Alevis hate because of their belief that he killed many Alevis during his war against the Safavid Shah Ismail in Iran. Moreover, the name of the local school was changed to "Yavuz Sultan Selim Elementary School," although the local people called it "Democracy Elementary School." As one of the respondents put it: "They did it out of spite" (*bize inat*). These symbolic oppressive measures of the state were complemented by physical interventions. A mosque was built by the state despite the fact that, as an Alevi resident put it, "we have nothing to do with the mosque." A former leftist leader, an Alevi, also said: "We were sure that a mosque could never be built here, that this neighborhood was safe, that it would always be free of mosques. Yet, right after the 1980 military takeover, they built this mosque (in 1981) to defy us."[14]

After the violent intervention of the state into the neighborhood during the coup d'etat, many families attempted to protect their children from harm by keeping them out of politics. In this new political milieu, leftists fell out of grace; they lost their status in the eyes of many residents. Some isolated themselves, some left the neighborhood, and some tried to survive, trying to repoliticize the local population.

The growth of the neighborhood continued through the 1980s. The mafia was back, and so was the resistance to it. The

Alevi woman *muhtar* took the lead. As a woman respondent described, she would walk around at night with a pistol in her belt, checking on the neighborhood to prevent the action of the mafia; she would stand by the bulldozer, giving orders to build houses on the land claimed by the mafia.

In brief, in this neighborhood, a new model of *gecekondu* development was practiced, which was a planned one and which was kept out of profit-oriented concerns. It was part of the leftist "liberated territory" project that challenged the status quo. Interestingly, despite the claims about the project that it remained outside the state, people never lost their contacts with the authorities, bargaining for some services and infrastructure. It was ruptured by the military coup, putting an end to radical politics and practices. How this affected the relationship of the neighborhood with the state in the neoliberal regime is elaborated below.

Reflections Of The Neoliberal Urban Coalition In The Alevi Neighborhood In The 2000s: Dialectics Of Resistance And Cooptation

In 1992, an urban transformation project (UTP) was proposed by the social democrat mayor of the time who believed that it would benefit this "leftist" neighborhood. It was the pioneer of such projects. However, it was stopped by the local people when they were mobilized against it by the Alevi woman *muhtar*. The rumor is that she had several *gecekondu* plots for which she did not have title deeds, and hence the project would work to her disadvantage. It was in 2006 that another UTP was initiated, this time by the JDP's district mayor. The present *muhtar*, an Alevi man with leftist leanings, gave conditional support to the project. He wanted "modern" apartment buildings in the places of the *gecekondu*s, but he insisted that the original project should be revised to enable the local people to sell their *gecekondu* plots to *müteahhit*s instead of giving them to the local government in

return for standard apartments in the MHA's housing project. This meant more apartments to receive in exchange for their land, and hence more profit for *gecekondu* land owners. His struggles, through lawsuits and political challenges, against the original form of the UTP bore results, and an "atypical" UTP in the locality was implemented, which allowed the people who had titles to their land to sell them to *müteahhit*s.[12] Thus, it was the *muhtar* who affected the decisions about the UTP. Accordingly, this points to the significant role the *muhtar*s play in the formation and transformation of *gecekondu* neighborhoods, reinforcing or challenging the prevailing urban coalition.

This transformation of the locality also fit the interests of the mayor. Transforming the physical environment from a *gecekondu* settlement to a settlement of high-rise apartment blocks would bring social and political transformation. The Alevi majority in the locality would be gone, along with the leftist rule and the potential of political resistance. The first building built in the neighborhood after the UTP was put into action was a huge mosque and a tall apartment complex next to it, built by a Sunni local developer on the land he owned.

In the meanwhile, resistance to the Mamak UTP in the larger district emerged. This project, in the partnership of MHA and the Mamak municipal government, would demolish 15,000 *gecekondu*s to transform the area into a middle-class district. It was the proof that the new urban coalition excluded the *gecekondu* population. The project would displace the *gecekondu* residents from their neighborhoods and relocate them to the MHA's projects in distant locations. Those residents with title deeds would be given an apartment in the MHA's housing projects in return of their *gecekondu* land, and those without title deeds as well as tenants, who would have been "tolerated" in the populist regime of national developmentalism, faced the prospect of eviction. Leftist groups organized resistance to the project, basing their discourse on people's right to their neigh-

borhood and homes, protesting the municipality's practices of displacement and forced relocation of the urban poor.

Stated briefly, while the particular neighborhood where the ethnographic fieldwork was conducted was coopted by the individual material gains which the local UTP brought to the majority of residents, resistance was organized in the larger district against the Mamak UTP. Today, conflict and contestation grow between local populations and municipal governments in the urban periphery where UTPs are in the process of implementation. While the "new urban coalition" is trying to consolidate itself, it is facing some resistance.

Conclusion

The two *gecekondu* neighborhoods had their distinctive characteristics largely shaped by their geographical locations. This led to the spatial concentration of particular populations, namely, conservative Sunnis that supported the right-wing and Islam-leaning political parties [Sunni; right-wing (SR)], and "oppositional" Alevis that supported the left-wing political parties [Alevi; left-wing (AL)]. The local composition brought them some advantages/ disadvantages in a particular era, which turned into disadvantages/advantages in a different era. They differed from each other significantly in terms of the processes of their formations and transformations into apartment districts, situating themselves differently in the "urban coalitions" of the two different eras. While the first neighborhood where mainly conservative Sunnis lived (SR) was formed by the collective acts of individual families without any engagement with outside political groups, the second neighborhood where Alevis were the majority (AL) developed as part of a political project of the left. Accordingly, while the SR developed as a spontaneous neighborhood, with houses scattered here and there and whose services and infrastructure were obtained by bargaining with municipal

authorities, the AL developed as a planned locality which was kept outside profit-seeking agents and whose basic infrastructure was built by the collective effort of the leftist youth and the local people. In the politicized environment of the 1970s, while the SR remained largely outside radical collective action, the AL became a hot spot of leftist mobilization. Accordingly, when the military intervened on September 12, 1980, the SR moved quite smoothly into the 1980s, while the AL, confronted with the oppressive measures of the state, lived in danger. In their approach to the UTPs, in the SR, despite their loyalty to the ruling political party, the residents as the urban poor were powerless in objecting to the UTP implemented in their district. Their inexperience of collective mobilization and their trust in the ruling party to which they had given full support rendered them ineffective, failing to organize themselves collectively to stop the project or to bargain with the mayor to revise it to bring them some advantages. On the other hand, in the AL, in the local leadership of the *muhtar*, the UTP was revised to bring advantages to the *gecekondu* owners who were the majority in the neighborhood, while those without title deeds and tenants, who constituted a very small number of the residents, were victimized. The AL carried the potential to resist the UTP: the residents could easily join the collective resistance growing against another UTP in the wider district, which was built upon the past experiences of collective mobilization of residents. But they did not resist because of the advantages gained by the majority. Consequently, while in the AL the transformation of the *gecekondu* neighborhood was carried out by private developers who would build apartment buildings on the same plot of the *gecekondu*s without displacing the *gecekondu* owners and with whom they had the chance to bargain for more apartments, in the SR the neighborhood was completely demolished in the UTP and the residents were dislocated from their *gecekondu*s to be relocated in the apartments in the MHA's housing project which they obtained in exchange of their *gecekondu* land.

All in all, while the urban coalition of the populist era (i.e., national devlopmentalism) brought some bargaining power to the *gecekondu* population, the new urban coalition in the neoliberal era divided the *gecekondu* population: while some found the opportunity of making material gains from their *gecekondu* land, others were stripped of the "power" that they had in the populist era. While the former were included in the urban coalition as increasingly profit-seeking subjects, the latter were dislocated and relocated to faraway places where, as poor people, they were rendered invisible in the efforts of municipal authorities to make their cities attractive to investments and tourists, free of *gecekondu*s. Moreover, rural migrants lost their chance of living in environments that responded to their needs and preferences; they are now placed in environments shaped by the state to bring "modern" and "urban" lives to the "peasants in the city."

But such radical restructuring of cities is not easy to put into practice. The coming years are ripe with bargaining, and even with violent confrontations between *gecekondu* people and the authorities, as the state's intervention in the urban periphery intensifies.

NOTES

1 *Gecekondu* is the name given to squatter housing in Turkey. It literally means "landed in the night."

2 Alevis are the largest minority group in Turkish society (18-25% of Turkey's population). They are known for their oppositional stance against the state, despite the fact that they are dedicated supporters of Atatürk and his secular Republic. They lived in isolated villages during the Ottoman times, establishing their own sociolegal system (Kehl-Bodrogi 2003; Vorhoff 2003). Their religious practices and institutions weakened upon their mass migration to big cities from their rural habitus since the 1950s. Many Alevis participated in the leftist mobilization of society in the 1960s and 1970s, which further pushed their religion out of their lives (Vorhoff 2003). In the politics of identity of the 1990s, they asserted their collective identity and demanded recognition (Bruinessen 1996; Erman and Göker 2000).

Many intensified their support of the secular Turkish Republic in recent years upon their perception of the Islamist threat. Alevism differs from orthodox Sunni Islam in terms of its liberal religious beliefs and practices, such as gender mixing, and the consumption of alcohol, dancing (*semah*) and the play of the *saz* (traditional musical instrument) in religious rituals (the *cem*). (See, Bruinessen 1996, Olsson et al. 1998, and White and Jongerden 2003, for more information on Alevis.)

3 Some of the actors in this competition would be "hyper" markets, housing cooperatives, real estate companies, the nouveau riche to build their luxurious villas, and private universities to build their campuses (Işık and Pınarcıoğlu 2001: 168),

4 The party defines itself as "conservative democratic." On the other hand, the view that it is the extension of Islamist parties persists in "secular" groups.

5 The housing projects carried out by the MHA-private sector partnership, with their own sports facilities (tennis and golf courts, swimming pools), high-tech surveillance, luxurious apartments with roof gardens in skyscrapers (40 + stories), can be very prestigious, catering for the desires of the very rich. See, for example, the "My World" "My Towerland" "My Office" Projects of the Ağaoğlu Company in Ataşehir.

6 Municipalities prefer MHA over private contractors because of MHA's advantages, such as obtaining state land for free and relocating the displaced population in its social housing projects.

7 Funding for the first project was provided by TÜBİTAK, the Scientific and Technological Research Council of Turkey (June 15, 2007 - June 15, 2008); and the second project was carried out by Bilkent's research grant (2001-2003).

8 In the in-depth interviews, many respondents talked about their gardens and the trees that they had lost with tears in their eyes.

9 The gecekondu land tenure is complicated: there are those who own legal titles, along with those who own shares from an agricultural land (*hisseli tapu*) and those who have temporary title deeds (*tapu tahsis belgesi*). There are also tenants who are the most disadvantaged group in an UTP.

10 The lojmans were equipped with 24-hour hot water and central heating, increasing the attraction for *gecekondu* residents.

11 It is necessary to recognize the limited economic conditions and technical knowledge of gecekondu builders as well as the threats of demolition under which gecekondus were constructed, which put severe limits to construct an "ideal" home. Nevertheless, the

low density housing environment with houses in gardens and the semi-public/semi-private spaces in front of houses responded to the needs and preferences of rural migrants (see Erman 1997).

12 For example, no place to air woolen mattresses and no outdoor ovens (*tandır*) to make bread were provided in the MHA's projects.

13 The *muhtar* is the elected representative of an urban neighborhood or a village.

14 Interestingly, a generic term "mosques of defiance" (*"inat camileri"*) has been coined to refer to the mosques built against "secularists."

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